

Your Calling: The Secrets of Gaining Wisdom

Wisdom is not far away. It is not for the “gods” alone, as the ancient Greeks reckoned. It is not for the Platos and Aristotles of this world. It is an offer to all of us—to ordinary people like you and me. In fact, it is closer than your hands or your feet, closer than the air you breathe.

Wisdom is the result of a choice you can make. It starts with an act of the will. Like total forgiveness, you must make a choice to forgive totally or not to do so.

Chosen Fear of the Lord

The fear of the Lord may be understood in two ways:

- 1) A choice we make—wanting His opinion**
- 2) A passive sense of the fear of the Lord—an unsought feeling**

The primary way we get wisdom is by choosing the fear of the Lord. This means that you so respect God’s ways as revealed in His Word that you value and seek His opinion on any issue above any other perspective.

Note the order: You choose the fear of the Lord. Wisdom follows. The reason I emphasize this so soon and so strongly is because the book of Proverbs makes an inseparable connection between wisdom and the fear of the Lord. The fear of the Lord is the “beginning of wisdom” (Prov. 9:10). It is the wisest choice you will ever make. What is therefore so encouraging is that wisdom is clearly available to all of us, not merely to the privileged or the elite. It begins not with good breeding but with the fear of the Lord. The simplest and most ordinary person on the planet is invited to enter the arena of greatness—the obtaining of true wisdom. Few get

there, but all can.

This leaves all of us without excuse. We can't blame our inadequate brains, lack of learning or not being born to privilege. It is level ground. We all qualify.

Passive Fear of the Lord

It is of vital importance that we also grasp the second way, a passive fear of God. The passive fear of God demonstrates that we are talking about the living God. This means that God can roll up His sleeves as if to say, "Enough is enough," and answer prayer or even bring judgment.

Whereas the great gift of His wisdom comes as the consequence of a choice, there have been occasions when the unsought passive fear of God was experienced. How can this be? What is it like? Answer: It is when God steps in supernaturally. There are three ways this may happen:

First, passive fear may emerge when God does something wonderful and extraordinary. That should bring great joy, but it may bring fear. When Moses' face was radiant, the people were "afraid to come near him" (Ex. 34:30). When God answered Daniel's prayer, he stood up "trembling" (Dan. 10:11).

Second, passive fear may come upon people when God brings judgment and shows His displeasure. The Mosaic Law was God's judgment upon Israel for their transgressions (Gal. 3:19). When the people heard the thunder, saw the lightning, heard the trumpet and saw the mountain in smoke, "they trembled" (Ex. 20:18).

Third, the passive fear of God may come from anointed preaching. This happened under the preaching of John the Baptist. We sometimes forget that one of the earliest messages of the New Testament—if not the first—was to "escape from the wrath to come" (Matt. 3:7). It is sometimes thought that preaching of God's wrath drives people away from church. I

would only observe that there is less preaching of it today than ever, and church attendance, generally speaking, is lower than ever.

The Primacy of the Word

The way forward for finding wisdom is to choose the fear of the Lord, that is, to seek His opinion on any matter.

How then do you and I choose the fear of the Lord?

1) By choosing to be governed by the Word of God

There are two words in the Greek that can be translated “word”—*logos* and *rhema*. The words are sometimes used interchangeably; therefore, one must not press the distinction between them too far. But generally speaking, *logos* refers to Holy Scripture; *rhema* refers to a specific word of knowledge by the Spirit, as a prophetic word. I fear there has been an unhealthy interest in the *rhema* word in some quarters these days. Some people are keen to get an immediate word—a word relevant to their situation—far more than the long-term reading and meditating on Scripture.

Choosing the fear of the Lord should be a long-term commitment to get to know God by reading the Bible. This takes time. But if one makes the choice to know God’s Word, the reward down the road is incalculable. This is the way you get to know the will of God generally.

I urge you to have a Bible reading plan. One-year Bible reading plans are easy to find. This plan will keep you in the Word. It takes approximately 10 to 12 minutes a day (roughly four chapters a day) to keep this up. You will never be sorry.

The result: wisdom. It is guaranteed.

2) By a commitment to know God’s ways

God was grieved that His ancient people did not know His

“ways” (Heb. 3:10). You may not particularly like God’s ways—at first. We don’t always understand what God is up to in our lives. But the more we know God’s ways, the less surprised we are when disappointment comes or when evil things take place in the world around us.

3) Remembering the consequences

I show that I choose the fear of the Lord by remembering that there will be a consequence for my decisions. Moses made a strategic decision when he refused to be known as the son of Pharaoh’s daughter and enjoy the pleasures of this life; he chose to be identified with the suffering people of God. Why ever did he do such a thing? Hebrews 11:26 says, “He looked to the reward.” If Moses could be motivated like that, so can I.

There are two consequences that will bear our examination. First, there is the possibility of God’s disciplining us. It is not a disgrace to be disciplined or chastened; it shows you are a true child of God. Being disciplined comes from a Greek word that means “enforced learning.” We are all imperfect, and God lovingly corrects us when we err. David is the only person in the Bible called “a man after His own heart” (1 Sam. 13:14). Yet the chastening he underwent was extremely hard, precisely because God loved him.

The second consequence we should consider is that all of us will one day stand before the judgment seat of Christ. It is when we will give an account of the things done “in the body” (2 Cor. 5:10).

Choosing the fear of the Lord is to dignify God’s wisdom. It is recognizing the inevitable consequence of the decision to choose the fear of the Lord.

The Cost of Wisdom

Wisdom has a price. It costs not by purchasing it with money, but with the willingness to abandon certain pleasures of the

world. The cost may pertain to our pride. The cost could result in changing our lifestyles.

A high IQ is not required. This is because the wisdom that we are talking about in this book comes only from God. It is His prerogative to give or withhold wisdom. It is one of His greatest gifts to us. It is promised to those who make a wise choice—to choose to follow His ways.

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R.T. Kendall teaches us how to keep the Spirit's anointing and truly hear His voice a .

A resource on this topic:

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